We enjoyed a relatively good season in 2013. The quality of the water remained at an acceptable level and there were few episodes of the cyanobacteria blooms that we normally see during the beginning of the fall. At the end of September, a significant burst of bloom spread across much of the lake and lasted for several days.

We would like to thank everyone who respects the rules in force and adopts responsible practices with regard to the shoreline areas, the non-use of fertilisers, tree cutting, motor boat use and keeping septic installations in good working order.

In 2013, the members of RBL were able to take advantage of the “merchants-reward” program in which 12 local businesses offered interesting promotions and discounts to our 700+ members.

If we all work together, we will help give back to our lake and its tributaries a full measure of health!

The water level is a problem

The most significant aspect of the past summer was the unusual state of the water level in the lake, starting the second week of July and lasting until mid September: the lake was 35 cm, (14 inches) lower than its usual level. This was not pleasant for shoreline dwellers, boaters and those who practice water sports. The low water level no doubt also had an effect on plant and wildlife, the proof of which was the increased presence of aquatic plants. We should remember that Ville de Lac-Brome manages the level of the water from the Foster dam and the town made several contacts to try and correct the situation.

An abundance of healthy fish

In 2013, RBL carried out its first inventory of the fish in the lake. The work, carried out by several biologists who are specialists in ichthyology and a team of divers, helped establish and unexpected portrait of the fish populations in the lake, including several pieces of good news:

◆ the fish are abundant and in good health; the rate of anomalies is low;
◆ nine (9) species were captured in 2013;
◆ perch are dominant;
◆ yellow doré (walleye) and small-mouth bass follow;
◆ the biodiversity is confirmed but it is atypical of what has been observed elsewhere in the lakes of the region;
◆ however, the omnipresence of an invasive species of crayfish is troubling.

The sustainable use of territory

RBL has been working with Ville de Lac-Brome since 2009 to help define new zoning regulations. This frequently laborious project finally came to an end in 2013, with the adoption of the urban plan, complete with the supporting bylaws.
The new regulations clarify matters and in certain cases add protective measures in such areas as wetlands, tree cutting, shorelines, lot sizes and infiltration of runoff. These are gains that most certainly influence the management of the territory for several years to come and should help improve the quality of the water.

**Planning sound interventions**

Over the last several years, RBL has been asking municipal authorities to come up with a better intervention planning mechanism on its territory. To help with the elaboration of this plan, RBL mandated a firm of engineers to study the situation. They suggested:

- In the short term (2014), an intervention must be made at the municipal beach to put in place a green infrastructure in the parking lot;
- Interventions should be made in the Argyll and McLaughlin sub-basins to install filter berms and sediment traps as well as correcting several problems caused by bad culvert installations;
- Installing filled ditches is proposed in such areas as Parc Eugène, Robinson Bay, etc.

During 2014, RBL plans to draw up a program of special projects on four strategic sites around the lake: rue Montagne, Conference, Price and Domaine Brome.

**Erosion control in West-Bolton**

In 2012, RBL ordered an assessment of the northeast branch of the Coldbrook, on the territory of West Bolton.

The report prepared by R A P P E L, a lake monitoring group of specialists was tabled with the west Bolton town council in early 2013. It contained 40 recommendations all aimed at better controlling surface run-off water along the roadways and in the drainage ditches.

RBL noticed that the reprofiling of ditches along Brill was accompanied by protection measures by the application of wood wool carpets laid down on the bottom of the ditch. We have since been told that many of the recommendations made by RAPPEL have been implemented. We should rejoice at this. Now we are waiting to see what will happen with the Mont Foster file in terms of the regulations in place and sound environmental practices.

**Sediment accumulation**

In 2013, RBL recruited a team of professional divers to evaluate the depth of sediment in different areas of the lake. Sixteen sites were visited by the divers and the depths of sediment assessed. As we expected, the sedimentation is quite deep, often as much as a metre, sometime 3 to 4 m. in the ditches.

**Public works, a weak link**

It is increasingly clear that managing run-off water is a major priority in terms of water quality. RBL feels that public works plays an important role in attaining these objectives. Unfortunately, at this time, we feel that the quality of the intervention and the delay in reaction time are unsatisfactory and would like to see changes in this essential service.

**Partners, the key to our success**

RBL always puts in place projects in partnership with key interveners. In 2013 we established partnerships with the municipalities in the watershed, MRC Brome-Missisquoi, the Université de Sherbrooke, the MDDEFP (Quebec ministry of sustainable development, environment and forests) and with some local merchants. RBL is convinced that this approach is the best one to improve on a sustained basis the quality of the water in the lake and its tributaries. These projects will continue in 2014 with more emphasis on concrete interventions on the ground.